

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming is reading quickly to find the general overview of the passage

Scanning is reading quickly to find specific details within the passage.

Skimming refers to the process of reading only main ideas within a passage to get an overall impression of the content of a reading selection.

Skimming is a type of fast reading. You might use skimming to look through a text quickly to get the gist (the general idea). So, if you want to know what’s going on in the news, you might skim through a newspaper or a news website. You wouldn’t have much detail but you would find out the main points.

How to Skim:

- * Read the title.
- * Read the introduction or the first paragraph.
- * Read the first sentence of every other paragraph.
- * Read any headings and sub-headings.
- * Notice any pictures, charts, or graphs.
- * Notice any italicized or boldface words or phrases.
- * Read the summary or last paragraph.

Scanning is a reading technique to be used when you want to find specific information quickly. In scanning you have a question in your mind and you read a passage only to find the answer, ignoring unrelated information.

When you’re reading you don’t have to read everything with the same amount of care and attention. Sometimes you need to be able to read a text very quickly. For example, to look up the word ‘valuable’ in the dictionary you wouldn’t start at the letter A and read every word. The most efficient way is to turn to the letter V and then find the words beginning with va-. This is called scanning through the dictionary. Scanning is one type of fast reading.

How to Scan:

- * State the specific information you are looking for.
- * Try to anticipate how the answer will appear and what clues you might use to help you locate the answer. For example, if you were looking for a certain date, you would quickly read the paragraph looking only for numbers.
- * Use headings and any other aids that will help you identify which sections might contain the information you are looking for.
- * Selectively read and skip through sections of the passage.

Comparison between Skimming and Scanning:

	Skimming	Scanning
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Definition	A technique for fast reading. A reader reads the article in order to get the general idea of it.	A technique in which a reader tries to search a particular text or word in the document
Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to go through the article quickly• Ability to understand what can be relevant and not in reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to find quickly• Use of fingers can be effective while looking for a specific information• Focus on key words
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally to get the general idea of an article• To sample a book before actually purchasing it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally to search a telephone number from a list• To find a particular quotation in a book
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the title carefully• First paragraph and introduction need to be read carefully• Emphasis on the reading of first sentence of every paragraph• Heading and sub headings should be read• Pictures, charts or graphs should be noticed• Words or phrase that are italicized or boldface must be noticed• Summary or last paragraph is important to understand the conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reader must be clearly aware of the specific information that needs to be searched in the document• Clues must be used to find the answer – like if one is searching for a date, then only numbers should be looked for• Headings can be helpful in suggesting the location of the desired information• One should be careful in reading and skipping the sections of the passage